

*Copy sent by Pouch.*

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9 January 1945

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Dear Henry,

Here is the story on Jean's resignation.

Yesterday afternoon, about 4 o'clock, he came in and stated very firmly that he wanted to go back. He insisted that he was through, that he wouldn't wait any longer, that the job could not be done, that in any case the weather would never clear up in time to allow it to go, that if it didn't go he would be in a fine pickle when it came to going back to the French Army, that we had done nothing about getting his commission, that he was tired of wasting his time, that no matter what I or anybody else said he was through.

I asked him if anyone had helped him to arrive at this decision and he said no and reminded me that he had advised me he was going to take this step about a month ago. That was not exactly the case. What he did about a month ago was this.

At the time Evrard was in the hospital with what we thought was jaundice, Jean said that he wasn't going to wait around Bari in the event that Evrard was hospitalized for any period of time. I agreed that he would not have to stay here. He then further stated that he was only going to try the mission for the coming moon period, and that if it didn't come off by then he wanted to go back to the French Army. I pointed out to him that the moon period had nothing to do with it now, inasmuch as he and Evrard had made their trial dark moon jump and had decided to jump even in the dark moon. He said that that was not the case at all, that no such decision had been made. So I left the discussion until Evrard came out of the hospital. When he came out they got together and settled their differences and it was agreed between us all that they were laid on from then regardless of the moon period. At that time I wrote the memo to Capt. Vujanovich of which I sent you a copy. Since this agreement effectively nullified Jean's statements about returning to the French army, I never brought the subject up again and neither did he. We continued our happy routine of waiting until he burst forth yesterday afternoon.

Since he has made what amounts to an irrevocable step, one can look back and find a good many traces to the effect that he would inevitably make it. He never really, to my mind, ever fairly faced the problem of what he would be up against once in Germany. He particularly did not do this while he was being briefed in France. George Howe need only tell you the lackadaisical manner in which he prepared his cover, and his total lack of interest in learning German. I thought that he would buckle down in Italy and try to develop his German. But he has never once tried. And it is not something you can make him do. We have made it possible for him to learn it. And with the proper urge on his part he certainly could pick up a lot of phrases from Evrard. In trying to make him learn, I myself have learned more German from Evrard than Jean has. And that is not a hell of a lot. All of this boils down to the fact that he has never really wanted to go but wouldn't admit it to himself. His letters to his girl friends which Gil censored showed that he was boasting to them that he was going to operate as a spy in enemy territory.

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He wanted glory. But he also is the kind of fellow who wants his commission in the French army. He is the kind of fellow who now wants to return to France to join the French army by way of Algiers where he can see his girl. He is the kind of fellow who wants me to send him back to parachute school now that he has backed out so that he can get three more jumps and qualify as a French parachutist. He glories in all the little past details of his training in Algiers. He was happy with all the lads at Stenzel's school. He was happy to show himself off before Andre and Mouton as the guy who now had a really tough mission, much tougher than theirs ever could have been. But he's been here now waiting and waiting. Thinking about home, not getting any letters, no place to go except Bari. He has gotten as fat as a pig. He literally eats all the time. Psychiatrically, I suppose there is a significance in that. In any case, he has had plenty of time to think the whole thing over and over and over, and the result is he just doesn't want to go. He has got 17 different reasons for not wanting to go. The mission hasn't changed. The Russians still have a long ways to go before they'll get there. He has changed. My only reproach to him was that he has tied up time, energy and personnel on something that he should have made up his mind on before leaving France. He knew that he might have to wait here all winter before he came down. I told him about that possibility on three separate occasions. And I put it to him seriously and asked him if he knew what it meant to wait. I told him about your mission from London London that had to wait so many months. His answer each time was, "Je m'en fous moi." And that has been his answer about why he didn't learn German, about why he didn't bother with his cover, and now it is his answer about why he isn't going on the mission. He's just decided he is not going and he doesn't give a damn.

He has shown himself to Evrard on so many occasions as being erratic, childish and unpendable that this is the final straw as far as he is concerned. Even if we could hand him a Captain's commission on a silver platter and get him to change his mind, I don't think Evrard would be very enthusiastic about it. Can't say I blame him.

It is possible that Jean has met someone in town and talked to them. It couldn't be one of Gerry's boys because they are all away somewhere. Even if he did, that is water over the dam now, as is all I have written above. If he did meet someone, that could only be considered as one factor in his decision. ~~xxxxxxxx~~ Another last straw on his side, so to speak.

My writing at such great length on this while it is fresh in my mind is partly an explanation, partly an effort to justify my own handling of him. I can't see how I have mishandled him. I have had to let both of them go to town. I haven't been able to take them to every movie or show that they have seen, or go on every walk with them. Sergeant Perich and I have accompanied them to the most of such activities. But I could never give them an order not to go out unaccompanied. The little house we have is confining enough as it is, and the only danger for them in town has been MPs. Both of them have been disappointed at not leaving but they have understood and have cooperated and made the best of it. All three of us have. I have deliberately kept myself on the same plane of life with them. I have stayed here with them at Storcelli, partly

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because I have no desire to lead the kind of life that exists around our officer's club and partly because I wanted to show them that we three were in the same boat as far as living was concerned. The minute that I availed myself of outlets that they had no access to I was afraid they would get the old complex about being joes.

I dont know. I'm glad Bob Andrews was here when the breakdown came. That's all I have to say about Jean's refusal to go.

He wants to be returned to the French army. He knows the pinpoint, the mission, and some of the contacts. He isnt the kind of boy who can keep his mouth shut. If we were to let him loose in France, he would find it necessary to justify his position to every friend of his that he came across. And that would inevitably mean telling something about this mission. I havent talked with him about the implications of his resignation in relation to the mission still being in progress. I dont intend to until it is decided what will be done with him.

About the mission itself. Eyrard has taken the whole thing calmly. He still has confidence in the mission if we can get another operator. He seems to feel that there was nothing that could have been done about "saving" Jean. In fact he is sure that ~~xxxx~~ since Jean could not sweat out the deal here in Bari, he probably would have blown sky high if he had to sweat it out in enemy territory, where he would be completely restricted, see practically no one, get no mail, etc.

I have questioned Eyrard briefly concerning his feelings on Andre, Mouton, and Sauveur. He is a little pissed off on Frenchmen, frankly. Of the three, he could probably be talked into Andre or Mouton on the grounds of their previous experience and their knowledge of radio. He doesnt want Sauveur because he doesnt think he is a good operator. You might be able to change his mind on that if you his field trial in France is or was successful.

My Sergeant here, John Perich, has volunteered to go on the mission. He was trained here in Bari a long time ago to go on a mission to Jugoslavia and has been waiting for a year. It was completely cancelled several months ago. I dont think he is as good an operator as the French boys. He is a steady guy with plenty of guts. But he thinks rather slowly. And his ~~thought xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ general morale and ability to think for himself have not been helped any by a year of strictly GI life. His cover would be tough. He speaks no German, he speaks a Serbian dialect, and speaks English with a terrific accent. He would have to be some type of foreign worker. I think we could fix up some sort of worker documents down here for him. But I dont consider him a strong man for the mission by a long shot.

I dont know what your reaction to all this will be. I think you should come here and straighten Jean out on the spot. Particularly if you enviage, as I do, the possibility of not sending him back to France at all but interning him somewhere here in Italy until ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ the future

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of the Dubuque mission is determined. It would also give you a chance to look Perich over and see what you think of him. And you could ~~per~~ prob bly convince Evrard of about taking one of the boys in France if that turned out to be the best thing to do.

Another reason for your coming: this office is moving, prob bly to Florence. What that means nobody knows. It certainly means a lot of shuffling around and waste motion as far as we are concerned.

well I feel pretty bad, God knows if Joan has been wasting his time, what have I been doing? This place is not the best spot to hold hands with people and we might profit bly save a lot of energy by forgetting missions for from down here, leaving a bait that we are going to mount Dubuque again so that we can continue training the boys now in school, and simply pull out and concentrate on Lyon and London.

Well, Annie will have read this far anyway. This will probably reach you after all has been decided, but I had to get it out of my system.

Yours,

*John*

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